



DANBURY TIMES

Flood Ravaged Town!

Downtown Danbury was under water. Many buildings, bridges, and roads were destroyed.



1955 was a very wet year. Two major storms in August and October caused Danbury's Still River and other small streams to flood. Much of downtown Danbury was damaged or destroyed. The losses totaled millions of dollars.

Downtown Danbury was declared a disaster area. The city was rebuilt. The plan called for many changes to Danbury. One change was to build a concrete channel for the Still River to flow through so that it would not flood again.

As a result, downtown Danbury was different. It went from a street of homes to an area of business. Many people had to leave their homes, even though they had not been damaged by the flood. Several



Main Street and White Street.

businesses that were on or near Main Street moved to areas around the new highway as downtown Danbury was redeveloped after the flood. Today downtown Danbury is a business area that also includes the public library, banks, and the police station.

Flood Stories

During the flood, Norman Basher, an electrician, was working to help shut off the electricity in the flooded areas. The water swept him away. He grabbed onto a refrigerator for dear life and floated down Main Street. Mr. Basher was OK, but got the ride of his life!

Another family lived on Orchard Street. While they were not flooded, they had no electricity. They sat in their car and listened to the news on the radio to find out what was happening in town.





Wartime

Two of the major wars fought during the twentieth century were World War I (1914-18) and World War II (1941-1945). The United States and all major countries were involved. Although the wars were fought mainly in Europe and other continents, the wars made things difficult for citizens here. There were shortages of food and fuel.

During wartime, Danburians were patriotic and wanted to help the war effort. Many Danburians became soldiers and fought in the wars.



World War I soldiers parade on Main Street.



Danbury War Memorial
Located in Rogers Park

The War Memorial was built in 1952. The building was designed in honor of the men who fought in World Wars I and II. Later, monuments were added for the soldiers who fought in the Korean and Vietnam wars. There are several monuments to honor the many soldiers who lost their lives fighting in war. Today, citizens can use the gym and fitness center inside.

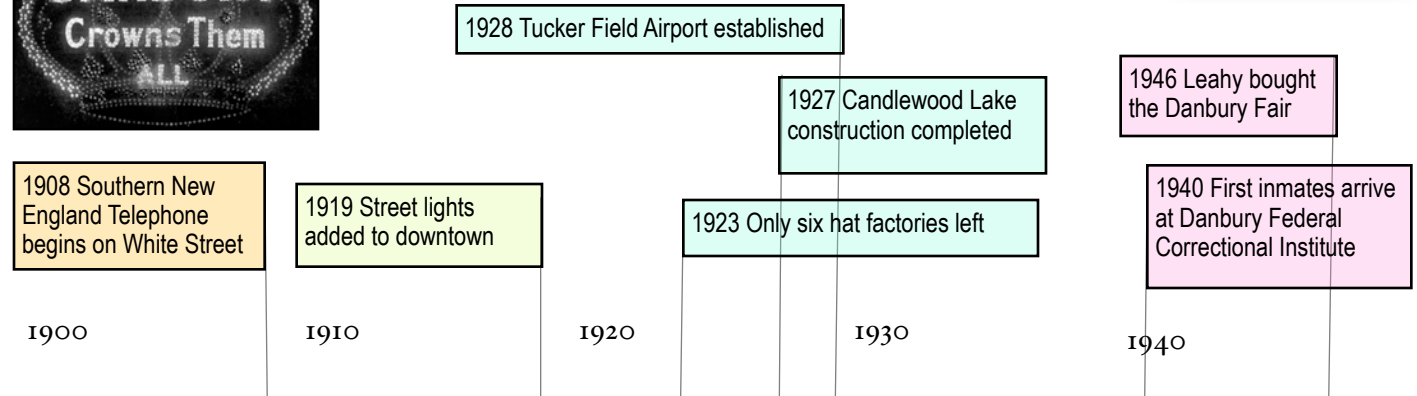
Hats Off

After World War II, fewer people wore hats. Since people rode in cars, they didn't need hats to protect them from rain and cold. When John F. Kennedy became president in 1960, he didn't wear a hat to his inauguration. Other men decided not to wear hats either.

As fewer people wore hats, fewer hats needed to be made. Hat shops and factories began to close. Danbury's economy began to change. "Hat City" no longer had hatting as its main source of income. The last hat factory closed in 1987. Today, Danbury makes a variety of products, including ball-bearings, medical supplies, and robots.



Danbury Through the Twentieth Century





Water Power!



Connecticut Light and Power Company (CL&P) wanted to find a way to use water to provide electricity to the Danbury area. CL&P decided to make one huge lake out of Danbury's four natural ponds. They began the work in 1926, and finished in 1927.

First, CL&P bought the homes and farmland from the people who lived near the four ponds at that time. After that, they knocked down all the buildings. CL&P dug out the ponds and areas that would connect the ponds. They hired people to cut down the trees and clear the land.



The plan meant making a dam in New Milford. The dam controlled the flow of water. Water moved up and down through a long pipe. Special machines were used to make electricity. When the water was released, it moved through the machines. The water moving in the machines created electricity. The electricity was used to power homes and businesses.

Candlewood Lake is the largest body of fresh water in Connecticut. It is also the largest man-made lake east of the Mississippi.

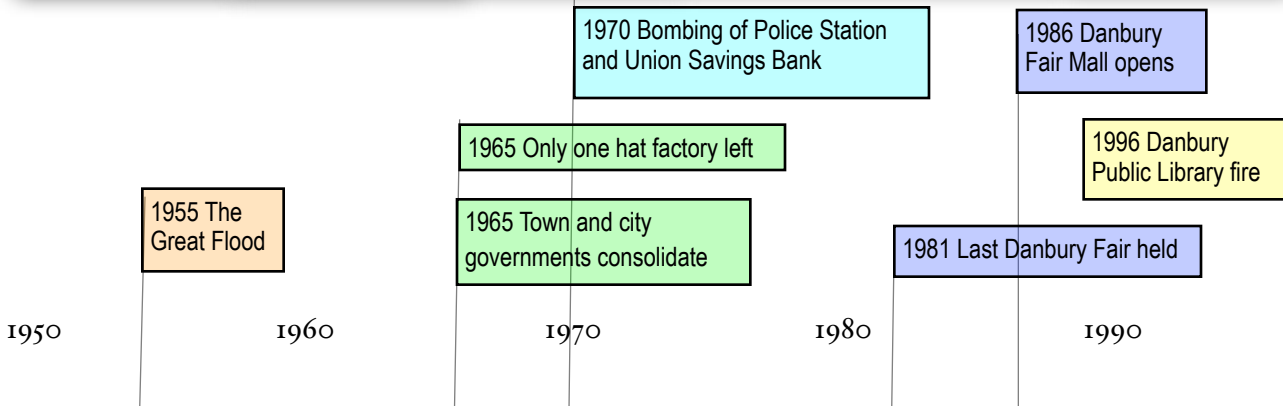
Top: Aerial view of Candlewood Lake
Bottom: Sailboats on the lake

fish in the lake. At first, the houses around the lake were small, vacation homes. Today, many families live near Candlewood Lake year round.

Candlewood Lake became very popular. People use it as a recreational area, or a place to have fun. People boat, swim, and

What's In A Name?

Many years before the lake was built, the land had many pine trees. Candlewood was named because Native Americans and early settlers used the knots and heart of the pine trees as lights.





On The Move!



Look for a trolley, a car, and a horse and buggy in this old photo.

Transportation changed a great deal during the twentieth century. In the early years, around the turn of the last century, most families did not have cars. People traveled from place to place by walking. Some families used horses and buggies.

People also used public transportation. They could get many places riding the trains, including New York City. Danbury had trolleys. The trolley took people to places around town. Later, the trolleys were replaced by buses.

In the early 1900's, cars were very expensive. Then Henry Ford built the Model T. It was made on an assembly line so the car was less expensive to make. People were finally able to purchase automobiles. Since more people were able to buy cars, more roads were needed. Many roads in Danbury were then paved. In 1958, Interstate 84 was built. Now, almost every family owns at least one car.

The Great Depression

Our country went through a very difficult time called the Great Depression. During the 1930's many people were out of work. Without work, many people had little or no money. Even Danbury had money problems. Policemen, firemen, and teachers went for weeks without pay. The city had no money to pay them and did not want to borrow money.

The federal government tried to help. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt created several programs called the New Deal. The New Deal programs gave people much needed jobs. The jobs improved the city. Roadways were built and repaired. A water filtration plant was constructed. The Federal Correctional Institution (a prison) was built. The New Deal also paid for two new schools. This helped Danbury's economy.



South Street School circa 1936

The Twentieth First Century Begins

In the early 21st century, Danbury has a population of about 75,000. It includes people from many cultures speaking over 40 different languages. The city has 18 public schools, including a magnet school. Its many parks and cultural events make it a great place to live.